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NUTRITIVE VALUE OF FOOD SUPPLY, 1909-45

A 35-page report of a study of the nutritive value of our per capita food supply, covering the 37 years between 1909 and 1945, has been prepared by the Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics in cooperation with the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. This technical report, with its tables and charts, discloses many facts of interest to professional workers and the lay public as well. The trends in the consumption of 11 major food groups show the shifts and changes in the diet of this country during the period covered. The changes from year to year are analyzed, and the content of national food supplies in terms of vitamins, minerals, and other nutritive values is reported.

These nutritive values are for foods as they are brought into the kitchen. No allowance is made for cooking losses or for edible food thrown away or left on plates. As all figures are national averages, they do not reveal the wide variations that exist among different sections of the country and among families of different incomes.

The study is extremely valuable because it presents an over-all picture of how well Americans have been fed in peace and in war, and in good times and depressions, and because it covers a longer period than any previous study.

Following are outstanding findings taken from a press release:

During the recent war years, food for American civilians contained more calcium, iron, B vitamins, and vitamins A and C than at any other time in the 37-year period. Important factors in bringing about these nutritional gains were high consumption of milk, eggs, vegetables, and citrus fruits, and the enrichment of white bread and flour.

During the period covered by the analysis, there was a steady increase in calcium, vitamins A and C, and riboflavin in the food supply. The rise in calcium was due largely to greater consumption of milk; the rise in riboflavin, to milk and enriched grain prod-

ucts; and the rise in vitamins A and C, to citrus fruits and vegetables.

Among striking changes in American food habits in the 37 years have been a 350 percent increase in consumption of citrus fruit and a 30 percent decrease in potatoes and grain products.

Because of the enrichment program, grain products now furnish a much greater share of the total available supply of iron, riboflavin, thiamine, and niacin, than before World War II.

These trends in nutrients in the food supply are a measure of change in consumption habits, reflect changed incomes, and indicate the response of consumers to nutrition education.

IS THE WORLD FOOD CRISIS OVER?

Whether or not the "crisis" is over seems to be more a matter of terminology than of sufficiency of food in the devastated countries. Authorities seem to agree that the crisis is over, for the time being, because the United States and other countries that produced abundant crops this year have met their commitments to less fortunate nations. But authorities also say that all the foreign countries now dependent on UNRRA will continue during 1947 to need imports "to sustain a minimum standard of life for their people." Therefore, the immediate crisis has passed, but our responsibility for sharing still exists.

Selected excerpts from UNRRA's reports on future food needs bear out this statement: Around \$1.1 billion worth of food may be required between August of this year and the harvest of 1947 for countries now dependent upon UNRRA. It is likely, however, that these imports will have to be reduced to about \$750,000,000 because of the world shortages of basic foods such as cereals and fats. In any event, the UNRRA-dependent peoples will need continued food imports to sustain a minimum standard of living. Some agency or agencies, national or international, will have to find the means to procure

and ship this food, or some of these importing countries will be in a worse position 2 years after the war than they were during 1945 and 1946.

Reports received by UNRRA include the following facts: Of the 23,900,000 people in Poland, 800,000 are invalids; 1,500,000 are sick people; 2,000,000 are children whose parents are too poor to support them; and 4,000,000 are people who have no houses.

More food and medical supplies, plus the means of distributing them, are needed to alleviate the critical situation of 16 million persons in the South Hunan and North Kwangsi provinces of China, according to a report by UNRRA investigators now surveying the famine areas in China. The Chinese National Relief and Rehabilitation Administration in both provinces is attempting to administer relief, but supplies are inadequate. China's crops for 1946 indicate large production deficits compared with the average annual production for 1930-37, according to a survey of the far eastern country by the UNRRA Shanghai office.

On July 25 a report by a USDA statistician who spent the first half of the year in Frankfurt, Germany, was released under the title "Germany's Food Crisis Goes On." The gist of the report was that there are many thousands of people in Germany who have not had a good meal this year and who will not have a good meal in the year to come. It is the city people and those living in large towns who suffer most. The daily ration for the normal consumer is a little better than 1,200 calories a day, or a little more than a third of what the average American consumes. The people are much more run down physically than they were a year ago, and their resistance to sickness and plague is less. The report said that the problem of helping to feed Germany "is not entirely a humanitarian one. If we as Americans are interested in the kind of Government that will arise in Germany, and the attitude and thinking of the people in the years ahead, it is up to us to help maintain a reasonably healthy people in that country."

"YOUTH UNITED FOR FOOD FAMINE RELIEF"

Representatives of 17 national youth agencies met with President Truman in July and pledged their strong support to any phases of the famine emergency campaign that continue during the fall and winter. They are to be known as

"Youth United for Food Famine Relief," and have been designated as a youth auxiliary food committee of the President's Famine Emergency Committee. A plan is in the making to form similar youth auxiliary committees in local communities, to function cooperatively with and under the guidance of adult groups. In fact, this was the first of three recommendations of the teen-agers who met with the President. Their other two proposals were "a National Youth Famine Relief Week to spur lagging public support to the Government food program," and the promoting of victory gardens and encouraging of plant pest elimination campaigns.

"NUTRITION COMMITTEES AT WORK"

This is the title of a section of the July 26 issue of a weekly mimeographed USDA release which is called the Famine Campaign Round Up. The article states that by July 1 the Nutrition Programs office of PMA had received reports on the famine emergency activities of nutrition committees in 24 States and in Chicago and New York City. It summarizes the high lights of these reports as follows:

"Soon after the first appeals for action on food conservation, many State nutrition committees met to coordinate the efforts of agencies and groups represented on the committee. Letters and famine emergency material were sent to county and local nutrition committees, and subcommittees were appointed to develop suggestions and special information releases.

"Later, radio and press releases were prepared in the name of nutrition committee chairmen or prominent members; talks were given before a variety of groups and organizations; practical suggestions for conserving wheat and other grain foods and fats and oils, as well as material on preventing waste were prepared and distributed by several nutrition committees."

The article continued with a few brief excerpts from eight of the State items on campaign activities that have been reported more fully in recent issues of the Nutrition News Letter.

In view of the large volume of campaign reports from many agencies and groups received by the office that selects material for the Famine Campaign Round Up, we were gratified to see the space given to nutrition committee action on this important program.

AMERICAN RED CROSS PARTICIPATION IN EMERGENCY PROGRAMS

At the suggestion of the Famine Emergency Committee, the American Red Cross developed three pieces of campaign material in April. One of these, entitled "Save Food—Save Lives," contained on one side a check list by which homemakers could score their food saving habits, and on the other side a reminder list on what to save, to be pinned up on the kitchen wall. This sheet was distributed to school children through the Junior Red Cross, and reached about 20,000,000 homes. A folder, "Stop Starvation, Tilt the Horn of Plenty," containing program suggestions, was distributed to Red Cross Nutrition Chapters for the use of staff members. A third publication in the form of a small leaflet called "Save a Little Wheat, Fats, and Other Foods and Help a Lot!" was developed for distribution in Red Cross nutrition classes, in connection with lessons on conservation.

More recently, as a follow-up to the observance of National Home Food Preservation Week in July, the Red Cross has promoted the idea of old-fashioned neighborhood canning bees. Twenty thousand copies of a bulletin—"Stock American Pantries with Home Preserved Food in the Interest of a Better Fed World"—which outlines suggestions for coordinating the neighborhood canning bee campaign, have been sent to Red Cross Chapters and to USDA Extension and PMA field offices. Local nutrition committees are mentioned as one of several organizations and agencies that might be interested in cooperating in or sponsoring this type of home canning project.

The 1946 series of American Red Cross broadcasts, "Food for All," starring the cast of "One Man's Family," is now being used by many local chapters in the interest of building "a stronger and healthier America." Though these programs were written before the Famine Emergency Campaign was launched, facts about the emergency program are featured insofar as possible when the local publicity on the broadcasts is developed.

HARVEST FESTIVALS AND CANNING CHAMPIONS

Plans now are under way or completed in many communities for a 1946 Harvest Festival. As we wrote you on August 6,

the National Garden Institute is contributing to the success of these festivals by offering a Trophy Award to the homemaker who is selected as the Home Food Preservation Champion in each State that participates in the plan. The Institute is also issuing a Certificate of Award for each local Harvest Festival champion. Your county agricultural extension agent, the chairman of your local Famine Emergency Committee, or the director of a garden and home food preservation center can supply more details.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

PENNSYLVANIA.—Members of the State Nutrition Executive Committee met on June 3 to report their activities on the Famine Emergency Campaign. Reports were made by representatives of vocational home economics education, public health, extension, home service departments of utility companies, federations of women's clubs, elementary schools, State institutions, the Farm Security Administration, and colleges. The following activities were reported:

1. Conferences to inform workers of campaign objectives and methods.
2. Daily and weekly news articles on need to share food and on conservation measures.
3. Radio time on the more than 40 stations in the State.
4. Leaflets prepared in cooperation with county USDA councils.
5. Recipes, using emergency flour and little or no fat, distributed.
6. Food collection campaigns.
7. Food preservation campaigns, workshops, and clinics.
8. Centers for testing pressure gages.
9. New food preservation circulars.

MINNESOTA.—The State Nutrition Council reports that two pieces of work were undertaken by its Food Preservation Committee.

(1) Because of the active cooperation of the State bacteriologist, an arrangement has been made for him to review and either approve or comment on all canning material issued by the university. As his recommendations are followed conscientiously by practically all agencies dealing with canning problems, the information given out by one State agency rarely is contradicted by another.

To further this uniformity, the Nutrition Council has asked the State bacteriologist to sponsor meetings to which persons representing all sources of and outlets for canning information are invited. The first year quantity canning was stressed; last year, safety; and this year, quality in the finished product.

(2) Another activity of the council in the food preservation field has been the sending out of a simplified statement of the State law regarding the responsibility of individuals who can food for resale. Regulations regarding licensing, personal liability, and sanitation are not always fully appreciated by the canner. This legal opinion, written for the State Nutrition Council by the Minnesota Attorney General, raises the question of liability of both the operator and the organization for which the canning is done.

In addition to these two, many other activities to promote the food preservation program have been undertaken by the council, but they have been sponsored by member agencies of the council. A number of the county nutrition committees have undertaken and carried out a variety of projects in the food preservation field and have promoted the victory garden program also.

HAMPSHIRE.—The School Lunch Committee of the State Nutrition Committee planned the program for the 5-day School Lunch Institute held at the State University July 8-12. The institute was sponsored by four State agencies: The Extension Service, the Board of Education, the Department of Health, and the university. Registration was handled by the head of the home economics department. The following topics selected from the agenda for the first 2 days will serve to indicate the wide scope of the program: "Looking Ahead for the School Lunch Program," "What Can the Parent-Teacher Do for the School Lunch Program," "Sanitation and School Lunches," "The Nutritionist Looks at the School Lunch Program," and "School Lunch as Part of the School Curriculum and Community Life."

Opportunities for nutrition education, school lunch operating problems including record keeping, planning a new building or remodeling old buildings to accommodate the program, and quantity recipes were other topics presented and discussed. Educational movies were shown, and an exhibit including poster

material. Not only the content of the institute's program but also the cross-section of background and interests of the speakers and discussion leaders made this an epoch week for the school lunch program in New Hampshire.

MONTANA.—At the July meeting of the State Nutrition Committee, a three-point program of work for the coming year was discussed and adopted: (1) A food acceptance study to determine likes and dislikes, and develop nutrition teaching around the findings; (2) a biochemical study of the nutritional status of youth of Montana, beginning with freshmen at the State College; and (3) a State-wide Better Breakfast program.

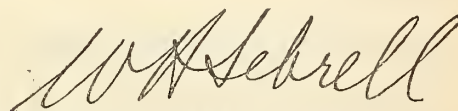
The meeting included a discussion of the availability of various commodities in relation to the over-all food situation. The committee's cooperation on the famine emergency was summarized, and special committees gave their reports.

The chairman of the School Lunch Committee reported the meeting her group had held on May 31, in terms of topics discussed and action taken. Plans were made to have a speaker at the school administrators' conference in Missoula to present the importance of school lunches as an educational medium, the need for training courses, the importance of supervision of children during the lunch period, and the availability of a representative of the State Department of Public Health for talks on sanitation, and other subjects related to school lunch operation. The committee discussed in some detail the action it might take or material it might prepare on such topics as training of cooks and other personnel, and agreed to have suggestions and recommendations ready to present at the next meeting.

Sincerely yours,



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